Name of Program Reviewed:

Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology
Master of Arts Degree in Kinesiology

Sonoma State University

Reviewer:
Rebecca K. Lytle, Ph.D.
Chico State University

Date of Visit:
May 6, 2013
I. General Overview of the Program

Kinesiology is one of the fastest growing majors in the country. In California there was a 50.5% increase in majors over a recent 5-year period while the general overall enrollment increase was 6.5% (retrieved May 11, 2013 from: http://www.americankinesiology.org/white-papers/white-papers/kinesiology-on-the-move-one-of-the-fastest-growing-but-often-misunderstood-majors-in-academia). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity provides multiple statistics and reports on the need for more physical activity and better nutrition (http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/index.html). The growing health concerns of the United States related to physical activity, or inactivity, has lead to an explosion in the need for professionals with training to address teaching healthy behaviors. These individuals include teachers, coaches, fitness trainers, cardiac rehabilitation specialists, and physical and occupation therapists. This review will examine the Department of Kinesiology’s educational programs in the context of the university, as well as how it is positioned to meet the needs of the region.

The Department of Kinesiology (here after referred to as the Department) is currently housed in the School of Technology and Social Sciences. The Department grants both an undergraduate B.S. and a graduate M.S. degree, both will be addressed in this report. Currently, the undergraduate degree program is designated as impacted and the Department as a whole is serving over 500 students. The Department employs seven full-time faculty, three assistant professors and four full professors.

Kinesiology is the academic discipline, which involves the study of physical activity and its impact on health, society, and quality of life from multiple disciplines. The Department of Kinesiology's concentrations provide a comprehensive application of the field of Kinesiology for future professionals in a variety of careers. Conversations with faculty, students, and staff revealed a strong commitment to the Department. The following review will present general impressions of the Department’s strengths, potential needs, and considerations for future development. This reviewer recognizes that a one-day visit provides a limited “in-
depth” look at the various components and dynamics of the Department and the perceived needs. All recommendations should be considered for relevancy given the context of the Department, School, and University. It is hoped that this outside perspective will provide helpful recommendations for the continued support and advancement of this department. This reviewer feels that the comments shared by faculty, student, staff, and administrators were valid, candid, and helpful for understanding the “big picture” of this department.

II. Mission and Diversity

Mission

The Department mission is clearly aligned with the University mission. The university mission focuses on life-long learning, cultural perspectives, fulfilling careers, and the health and well being of the world at large. These concepts are clearly reflected in the Department’s catalog description

“...The kinesiology major program prepares students to lead and participate in a modern complex society and to assume multiple roles throughout their lifetimes...Graduates have acquired knowledge and experience that prepare them for lifelong learning, advanced study, and careers such as teaching, coaching, adapted physical education, allied health fields, health and fitness industries, sport industries, and exercise and movement sciences.... (Sonoma State University Catalog, 2012-2013, pg 173).

A review of the curriculum and specific student learning outcomes demonstrates support of this mission including a focus on diversity and the health and well being of others. The multidisciplinary nature of kinesiology supports a strong liberal arts undergraduate degree while preparing students for a broad range of professional or pre-professional programs. It is clear this Department serves an important role in preparing professionals in the region and the State. The Department concentrations and mission also align well with the focus of the American Kinesiology Association.

Kinesiology is an academic discipline, which involves the study of physical activity and its impact on health, society, and quality of life. It includes, but is not limited to, such areas of study as exercise science, sports management, athletic training and sports medicine, socio-cultural analyses of sports, sport and exercise psychology,
fitness leadership, physical education-teacher education, and pre-professional training for physical therapy, occupational therapy, medicine and other health related fields.  (Retrieved May 11, 2013 from American Kinesiology Association, website: http://www.americankinesiology.org/about-us/about-aka)

This Department prepares students for most of the above-mentioned professional areas. In addition, the catalog descriptions for the concentrations are clear and provide concrete examples of what career options are linked to each focus area. The table presented in the Department 5th year review document, “Examples of Course Embedded Assessment for Learning Objectives,” illustrates how the mission and learning objectives are translated in the curriculum and evaluated.

Diversity vision

The University diversity mission presents a focus and appreciation for cultural diversity, intellectual diversity, and social justice and equality. The student learning outcomes for the Department consistently included the terms “lifespan,” “diverse populations,” and “diverse cultures.” Courses descriptions from the catalog that clearly include diversity concepts were KIN 301, 305, 315, 325, 425, 426, 427, 430C, 460, 495A, and 525. Additionally many other courses were identified as potentially including elements of diversity in the course contents. However, without a complete review of course syllabi it would be difficult to list them all.

The Department’s student population of majors has traditionally been more females than males with the current rate of females at 61.6%; this is consistent with the university statistics. No other student diversity data were presented. The Department faculty includes five females and two males. One faculty member is Japanese and one member is Turkish. Diversity of ideas and disciplines is clearly represented across the Department.

III. Curriculum

The curriculum is comprehensive and provides educational training in a variety of fields and disciplines needed in the region and throughout the state.
Undergraduate

Strengths:

The undergraduate program is very comprehensive with five concentrations including, Adapted Physical Education, Physical Education, Exercise Science, Lifetime Physical Activity (Fitness Wellness or Coaching), and Exercise Science. While this may seem like a lot of concentrations, the faculty have streamlined the process for various degrees and all of the concentrations share the supportive courses and a degree core totally 46 units. This core includes content on history and philosophy, sociology, psychology, motor development, motor learning, biomechanics, physiology, and nutrition. This is one of the strengths and strongest core curriculums in the CSU. The additional units for each concentration range from 23-30 units. However, due to the interdisciplinary nature of Kinesiology many courses are shared across concentrations. For example, several classes are shared across Adapted Physical Education and Physical Education. The Interdisciplinary Concentration shares the 46 common units and then most of the additional courses are from outside the Department with the exception of 9 units that cross over to other concentrations. All concentrations require a field experience class. Based on the organization of the curriculum the Department has done an excellent job of streamlining classes and providing advising plans that guide students well in the professional direction that matches their goals.

Students expressed a high level of satisfaction with their courses, the appropriate the level of difficulty, the high expectations of faculty, and the faculty expertise. Survey results from students revealed an overall quality their KIN coursework ranged from 4.22 – 4.95 (scale of 1-6). This was supported in undergraduate student interviews. Students were very pleased with their experiences in most classes and valued the hands-on learning in most curriculum, as well as the small class size, allowing for greater faculty-student interaction. Students believed they were getting a very well rounded course of study. In addition, the Department offers many integrated experiences that transfer theory to practice such as Saturday Sidekicks, teaching of Tech High School Students, the involvement of undergraduates in research, and the application of content through
many lab classes in the major. All of the concentrations reflect the interdisciplinary nature of Kinesiology and the value of cross-disciplinary work is shared by all faculty. Finally, the students were also involved in several professional clubs related to the discipline of Kinesiology.

Concerns:

Some concerns were shared in the student survey results and during the external review. These included a need for greater access to classes and concerns with some classes being rotated every other year. Both students and faculty expressed the recommendation of eliminating KIN 460. The rationale was that it seemed to be lacking a purposeful direction for the majors and there was inconsistency across teachers.

Students also expressed concerns with the biomechanics class. They felt the faculty was very knowledgeable but that the class was not challenging, with the same exams used every semester. Further, students were encouraged to share the exams. In addition, students felt that in this course they were not having enough opportunity to learn through their projects. They shared that the professor was completing much of the work for them. While the students felt the faculty member was being supportive, they wanted to learn more in the class. Some of these concerns may be related to the size of the lab space and the equipment available (see resource needs below).

Additional comments by students revealed that the computer class (CIS 101) might not be needed. Students felt they were entering college with sufficient knowledge and skills of computer usage. The students also felt that KIN 201 Introduction to Kinesiology was not needed by transfer students who already had a professional direction identified. The self-study suggested potentially making KIN 201 a GE class. It is suggested that this not occur until after impaction has been lifted. Given the current status of impaction, the Department is not in a position to recruit undergraduate students through an additional GE class.
Recommendations to consider:

1. Consider infusing computer content into selected classes to reduce units in the core. Many students feel they already have this knowledge.

2. Consider KIN 201 as a GE course once impaction is eliminated.

3. The Department does not have the resources to add classes at this time without eliminating existing courses first. Capstone focused classes should remain in the concentrations and identified as such only if needed or required at this time.


5. Consider adding one or two movement based physical education classes to the undergraduate concentrations; this would align with the community college transfer model.

6. Create substitutions for KIN 201 for transfer students who are already focused in their concentration. Transfer students might have a choice of taking KIN 201 or some other additional upper division course in their concentration.

7. Consider elimination of the Adapted Physical Education (APE) and Coaching Concentrations and putting these as minors. APE and coaching would attach nicely with many other majors. A minor in APE would allow pre-PT, pre-OT, recreation, child development, physical education, and a host of other majors that work with individuals with disabilities to add this minor. In addition, the Adapted Physical Education Added Authorization (APEAA) classes can be listed in the catalog along with the credential candidates that can add this authorization (MS, SS, and ED Spec). While the APA or APE minor may have many similar classes to the APE added authorization, they should be separate with some differing content. The same can be true for coaching. Most high school positions in coaching only require certification, which could be done through a minor or certificate. This would allow students from any concentration to add the coaching certificate or minor. The coaching certificate could then also attach to any professional getting a single subject credential in any discipline (history, math, English, etc) as well as any other
degree option. Careers in collegiate coaching require a master’s degree. The degree emphasis in coaching should be positioned as a M.A. program for entry into college and university coaching and/or administration.

8. Basic nutrition is typically outside the discipline of Kinesiology and might best be taught outside the Department. While this is currently inconvenient for the majors, the Department should focus on discipline specific needs, as this is the expertise of already stretched faculty.

9. While the physical education concentration is small, it mirrors the decline in majors across the State and is reflective of the statewide budget crisis. As the economy improves and teachers retire, there will be a tremendous need for teachers. In addition, there continues to be a consistent need for adapted physical education teachers across the State with many districts hiring APE teachers on emergency waivers, unable to find credentialed teachers.

10. A name change from Physical Education to Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) was recommended by the faculty. This is a good idea and will create parity with other similar programs across the country.

11. The Exercise Physiology Concentration needs to insure that undergraduates complete the University upper division requirements to graduate. Courses that would support this concentration include KIN 325 Introduction to Adapted Physical Education, KIN 342 Principles of Musculoskeletal Injuries, and KIN 430D Field Experience in Exercise Science. Consider allowing students to repeat KIN 430D for a total of 6 units. This would help add clinical hours students need for PT school applications.

12. The Department may want to consider reducing KIN 301 and KIN 305 to 3 units. After reviewing Humboldt, Chico, Sacramento, and San Francisco State’s Kinesiology curriculum this would place these courses in alignment with other departments. However, after reviewing the KIN 305 course description it seems as though this class is covering sport psychology and motor learning. Many departments offer motor development, motor learning, and/or motor behavior but struggle with which to put in the core curriculum, as it is difficult to include all of them. Other departments often
have either sport psychology or sport sociology in the core but not always both. These are difficult curricular decisions due to the interdisciplinary nature of kinesiology. Clearly the breadth of classes included in the core is strength of the Department.

**Graduate Studies in Kinesiology**

The graduate program provides an opportunity for individuals within the region to continue their training for an advanced degree. The general M.A. in Kinesiology supports advanced pay for many jobs such as: fitness program coordinators, camp/recreational program directors, health promotion and research professionals, rehabilitation programmers, and educators and coaches. In addition, a graduate program helps faculty to remain current in their own field of study and provides for advanced intellectual discourse with students. Graduate students can also be TA’s, teaching in the activity program or to in lab classes (when appropriate), thus saving money for the Department. Graduate students also provide a symbiotic relationship for faculty in that they often assist with research to learn new skills and provide helping hands for various projects. All faculty in the Department were supportive of the graduate program.

Strengths:

From reviewing the collective faculty vita for the Department it is clear that they have a strong background in their area of expertise and have the ability and desire to provide highly effective graduate studies to interested students. Graduate students expressed an extremely high regard for the faculty, their expertise, willingness to help, and access. Students in the M.A. degree program take foundation classes in research including methods and design, along with advance studies in each of the subdisciplines; pedagogy, rehabilitation, exercise physiology, and biomechanics. The nine additional elective units allow for more focused content related to the student’s interest area. All students complete some culminating activity, typically a thesis or project. The current curriculum appears to provide a strong advanced overview of the discipline.
The self-study revealed suggestions for proposed changes to the core and adjustments to the electives. The proposed revisions presented seem logical in two ways. First, the proposed plan provides a stronger research base and second, the realignment of curriculum allows for a greater specificity of content. These changes support recommendations made by students to provide greater elective choices. I would recommend the Department move forward with the proposed revisions described in the 5th year review.

Concerns:

Two concerns came to light during the on-site visit, 1) the low number of graduate students, was mentioned by both the dean and faculty, and 2) the workload around supporting graduate students through the thesis/project. In many CSU’s the graduate program is often an after thought with minimal resources committed to it. Since a strong focus of Sonoma State University is a comprehensive liberal arts education, the importance of graduate studies may be underappreciated. Sufficient - albeit not ideal - resources should be committed to support graduate studies within departments.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. While research is the primary focus of a master’s degree and students need to become a “master” at their discipline, this can happen in many ways. Considering the service region and the low number of students that want to go on for doctoral degrees, it is recommended that the Department consider a comprehensive exam option in lieu of a thesis. The demands of supporting students through research are high without any reassigned time allocations. Allowing for a comprehensive exam would take the burden off faculty who advise master’s theses. Students who desire to conduct research and who meet faculty requirements would complete a thesis. All others could take the comprehensive exam. Examining how other departments provide comprehensive exams would be a good start to looking at what would support this option, if desired.
Comprehensive exams would need to be coordinated by the graduate coordinator and faculty each semester. Typically students still need to have comprehensive understanding of research in a designated area of study determined with their master’s advisor.

2. Examine curricular offerings for time of day to insure availability for students who work.

3. Provide a course release each semester for the Graduate Coordinator to advise students, organize exams and theses defense, plan and review curriculum as needed, hold graduate meetings with faculty, and develop and distribute recruitment materials to the region. Look for creative ways that graduate students can be supported such as, grants, research projects, TA positions, or graduate assistantships. These strategies will help increase enrollments.

IV. Program Effectiveness (Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment)

The Department has clear student learning objectives (SLOs) for both the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. These SLO’s are outlined clearly in the University catalog. The self-study provided information on how the SLO’s are embedded within and across coursework for the major. These included portfolio review, research papers, exams, peer teachings, labs, and projects. Additional means of data collection regarding curriculum effectiveness included, graduate senior surveys, focus groups with seniors, student portfolios, and Department faculty discussions. Results from the self-study suggest that students are very satisfied with their education and are meeting the SLO’s. This was also substantiated during the site visit with current students and graduates rating satisfaction with the Department and learning outcomes high.

External accrediting boards are also involved in the Department review process for the Adapted Physical Education concentration and the Physical Education concentration. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) provides an external review process with specific standards for program quality. Both the Adapted and Physical Education concentrations are closely aligned and connected.
with the School of Education and have received National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and CTC approval. The Department is to be commended for their participation in this process and exemplary review.

The Department also serves the GE curriculum. GE classes include, KIN 217 Personal Fitness and Wellness and KIN 316 Women in Sport. Both of these courses align with GE goals and objectives and serve the campus as a whole to meet Category E, the Integrated Person. Such courses allow all students to have a greater understanding of the human body, the importance of movement, the role of athletics in culture, and the importance of physical activity across the lifespan.

Recommendations to Consider:

1. Place undergraduate student learning objectives on the website. This has already been completed for M.A. degree.
2. Find a consistent method for obtaining exit interview information from graduates so this can be institutionalized. Some examples might include holding a focus group in one or two senior level classes within the concentrations every semester, collecting student emails for surveys after graduation. The Department chairperson should take up this task.
3. Establish an advisory board committee of professionals in the community to provide feedback on currency of curriculum and career trends and hiring patterns. These individuals can also provide forums for students, provide career guidance, and professional advise.
4. Specific data from the results of the embedded SLO’s would be helpful in future reviews. For example what percentage of students are meeting specific SLOs? Finding a way to systematically review a few SLO’s each year will assist the Department in its overall review process for the next 5th year review.
V. Resources

Faculty

The faculty in the Department are all highly qualified and represent well the interdisciplinary nature of kinesiology. It was very clear from student interviews that the faculty are passionate about their areas of expertise and that students are highly satisfied with the instruction they receive. A review of the faculty’s vita and the self-study revealed that faculty members are active in the areas of teaching, research and scholarship. Each individual is active within their respective professional organizations and most are engaged in recent research and publications related to their content area. Additionally, the faculty are very involved with service within the Department and university from faculty governance (e.g. the Senate Diversity Committee) to professional education and research (e.g. Single Subject Advisory Committee, Curriculum Committee, Graduate Studies, or IRB).

Of greatest concern are the demands placed on this faculty, especially the junior faculty who are working toward tenure. It is clear that they are stretched with 12/12 teaching loads, large advising demands, committee work, along with expectations for tenure and promotion. The past 5th year review (2006-2007) it was suggested that the Department needed more faculty. At that time there were nine full-time faculty members. Currently there are seven, with one FERPing at the end of this term, leaving only six faculty. While there have been three new hires since the last review, the retirements have outpaced the new hires in the Department that was already in need. The declaration of impaction has assisted slightly in remediating the demands on the faculty but the demands are still beyond reasonable for the size of the faculty and demands for the major. There is concern that junior faculty will be stretched too far and look to other campuses for positions with greater support. This has occurred at many campuses in the CSU system as a result of increased demands largely due to the State Budget Crisis. Sonoma is a desirable campus and beautiful place to settle and work, it is hoped that the department chair, dean, and provost can provide ideas to support junior faculty and encourage them to remain in the area.
Of final concern is the lack of RTP guidelines for the Department. The lack of RTP guidelines and mentorship for assistant professors is creating added stress to the tenure process. There is a very large separation in the Department in terms of where faculty are on their professional trajectory, with four full professors and three assistant professors. This extreme chasm is creating tensions in the Department. It is recommended that strategies to create support for the junior faculty be explored. Some ideas might include reassigned time for heavy advising loads, accreditation reports, graduate program coordination, multiple course preparations, or larger department demands. In addition, junior faculty would benefit from applying for RSCAP grants to support their research or projects.

In conclusion, this Department is in extreme need of additional faculty to support multiple aspects of the Department curriculum. At minimum two to three hires would help support the curriculum for students within the next few years. Hires should be for individuals who can teach within at least two areas of kinesiology, for example motor development, research and pedagogy, or exercise science, strength and condition, and coaching. With several of the junior faculty going through tenure and promotion this year or within the next two years, this will also help reduce tensions. Furthermore, the development of Department RTP guidelines will help reduce the anxiety related to the vagueness of the tenure process.

VI. Facilities and Equipment

Sonoma State University is a beautiful campus. A tour of the Kinesiology facilities revealed some improvements since the previous review period as well as a host of needs. In 2010 the Department received funds to order some newer equipment for the Human Performance Laboratory. The Department is utilizing this equipment to assist in training future professionals with state of the art equipment. In addition the Department recently converted one of the classrooms to a Smart classroom. However, the financial resources for the Department continue to be minimal. In addition, one of the challenges for this academic department is that it has to share facilities with athletics and recreational sports. No other academic
facilities on campus have to share their teaching labs and spaces with outside
organizations to this overwhelming extent. The wear and tear from the shear
numbers of people who use these teaching stations puts a great strain on the
facilities and they are in dire need of upkeep and expansion. As the Department
looks to the next 5 years and future hires, it will be extremely important to maintain
currency with technology and laboratory elements to attract quality faculty to the
Department.

After a tour of the Department facilities it was clear there are several glaring needs.

1. Concerns with asbestos in the office floors, and perhaps other areas in the
   building.
2. The field house mats are from the 1960’s and are in dire need of
   replacement.
3. Equipment available for classes is limited and additional basic physical
   education equipment is needed.
4. There is a need for at least a small amount of OE money annually for
   equipment replacement costs.
5. Lockers are rusted and need replacements.
6. Biomechanics lab needs 3-D analyzing equipment to teach students the use
   of current technology in the discipline. The biomechanics space is extremely
   small for movement analysis.
7. Pool needs lane lines replaced and resurfacing completed.
8. The laundry room needs a door to the hallway. Currently the staff must walk
   through the biomechanics-teaching lab to get to the laundry room.
9. Faculty expressed the need for more classroom instructional spaces. They
   are often teaching 30+ students in a conference room.
10. More storage space for the equipment is needed.

Summary

The Department of Kinesiology has a clearly stated mission and expectations
for student learning outcomes that align with the University mission. The
curriculum is comprehensive, well designed, and reflects the professional directions of the field of Kinesiology. The faculty are professionally engaged, provide quality instruction, and a variety of service to both the university and the community in the region. Students consistently raved about the quality, knowledge and accessibility of the faculty and as a whole, students felt they were getting a quality education. The Department has made progress in creating and establishing assessment guidelines. Assessment practices should continue to develop and expand. Finally, the academic learning spaces are in need of renewal, expansion, and maintenance.

**Recommended Critical Priorities:**

- Create a detailed RTP document which will aid the Department and junior faculty in the review process.
- Determine a sequence of needs for the next three to four hires, considering future retirements, direction of curriculum, and the 5-year plan. There is a need for immediate hires in this impacted program.
- Determine strategies to reduce load on junior faculty prior to tenure to improve department morale and to ensure junior faculty remain in the academy.
- Caution adding new classes until additional tenure track faculty are hired.
- Facilities and equipment (see above)

Final Note: I want to thank the Department faculty, staff, students, dean and provost for their candid sharing, openness, and welcoming nature. This campus, the people who work within it, and the Department are to be commended for their wonderful great work. There is a clear commitment to student learning at all levels.